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The Sultry Queens of 'King' Have Arrived

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The Sultry Queens of “King” Have Arrived

By Mellany Dotson



With moderate success in their hometown of Los Angeles, the trio who goes by KING has taken the underground music scene by storm. Sisters Amber and Paris Strother and long-time friend Anita Bias, have a unique sound that's vaguely familiar but unlike anything you've encountered before. Their debut album “We Are King” has gained them much attention, giving the group the opportunity to perform

on the Grammy website and NPR's now popular Tiny Desk segment online. Even though the ladies assembled in 2011, the vocal chemistry and overall vibe is undeniable.

The second track on the album is by far my favorite. With a funky beat and 80's video game inspired visuals, “The Greatest” showcases the swagger of the group without fail. “*Who wants to run with the number one?*” is chanted, immediately catching your attention as it hums over the clearly defined production. On this song alone, these ladies “can take home the gold”.

The extended version of “Supernatural” starts with breathy vocals and smooth harmonies reeling you in with “*stay on my mind, all of the time, one of a kind*”. The nearly 7-minute track takes you on a journey. As nice as it is, the beginning half of the track is a vocal exercise that should've been left on the cutting floor. The song starts to pick up again with the trio softly singing

“*We’ve got a supernatural love*” towards the end. “In the Meantime” opens with a simple call and response between two of the ladies on the first verse followed by dreamy singing and chimes that transport you to a wonderland of voices. The most interesting part of this song is the use of not only the chimes but the retro synthesizers that seem to flawlessly accompany their velvety whispers.

The first time “Carry On” rang through my earbuds, I immediately thought of Solange, and just how melodic her voice is in similarity to this song. However, the beautiful harmonies and oddness of the song didn’t quite catch me the same way the others did. Their voices drown out the production and wasn’t well balanced enough to be likable. At times, it’s muddled with too many different sounds and parts that are blatantly distracting. “Red Eye” starts with booming bass drops and soft harmonies that make the audible contradiction work. With memorable lyrics like “*Egyptian paradise*” and “*tonight’s the night we escape...we’ll travel into the twilight*”. It’s the kind of music R&B is made to be without being overtly sexual but instead emotionally sensual.

The impressive jam “Native Land” has the chill Friday night vibe you’re looking for. Staying true to the alternative R&B feel, the soothing melodies glide over the production with ease and grace. The five minute track is reminiscent of all things tropical and ethereal focusing on returning and honoring “The Native Land” which can only be assumed as Africa.

With the re-emergence of R&B-flavored Pop, King does the genre justice in their vocals and production, leaving nothing to be desired. After opening for Solange on her epic 2016 tour, the ladies of King delighted audiences with their performance, solidifying their status and vocal prowess for years (and hopefully more albums) to come.